

THE GATEWAY

Summer Edition 2004 Number 2

Thursday, 26 July, 2004

<http://gateway.su.ualberta.ca/>

Faculté assault raises safety concerns

Andra Olson
News Editor

Two young women were victims in an isolated incident when they were sexually assaulted by a man at the Faculté Saint-Jean, say Edmonton law officials.

While walking through the grounds of the Faculté campus at about 2:30am on Monday, 16 July, two women aged 19 and 20 were forcibly assaulted.

Both girls were bound with rope during the attack; one victim was additionally tied with one of her own shoelaces. Alain Ducap, 41 has been charged in relation to the Edmonton assault and an additional crime in Calgary where Ducap allegedly assaulted a 15 year old girl.

Last summer Ducap was granted a life sentence for a separate crime. This term was reduced with a successful appeal and Ducap was released.

PLEASE SEE "ASSAULT" ON PAGE 2



Marcus Benoe / THE GATEWAY

Former U of A student Darrell Neuman cheers on the Canadians as a fury of bicycling triathletes blazes by, often reaching speeds of up to 70kph.

Government takes interest in student loans

Jhenifer Pabillano
News Editor

Starting 1 August, 2004, the Alberta student loan program will be transferred from CIBC to the care of the provincial government. But students need not worry—most of the changes taking place will be behind the scenes.

"The overall objective [of the program] is to ensure funding is in place for students who need loans delivered in the most efficient manner possible and easy access to loan applications," said Jerry Bellikka, spokesperson for Alberta Learning Communications.

Through the previous student loan program, CIBC provided its own money to students seeking loans.

This year, however, CIBC notified the provincial government that it would not renew its agreement to continue with this system.

In response, the provincial government has chosen to take responsibility for student loans, with loan funding now coming directly from the province.

The province has also agreed to contract out the processing of its loan program to Edulinx Canada Corporation, a company 51 per cent owned by CIBC. The remaining ownership belongs to an American based company.

Edulinx has also started a three-year contract to manage student loans for publically funded Canadian post-secondary institutions, stated a Canadian University

Press article.

By giving the loan administration to a private company, the government believes it will be cost effective for taxpayers. Consistency will also be maintained, as Edulinx had previously processed all student loans for CIBC.

As part of their contract, Edulinx will be setting up offices on major campuses across the province to aid students in the loan process. Access to loan applications will also be available online and in participating Canada Post outlets in Alberta.

With this step, the government also comes closer to integration of Alberta student loans, a system in which federal and provincial student loans are harmonized into one loan.

Through integration, which is already in place in Saskatchewan, each student will have to repay only one school loan in their academic career.

Almost no effect will be experienced for students applying for loans after the switchover. "The average student will notice a minimal difference in their loan programs," said Kory Zwack, Students' Union Vice-President (External).

"Both federal and provincial loans- if there are problems with them, you'll only need to deal with one company because it's the same service provider for both. It also means one less person you face to get your loan form signed just Edulinx."

PLEASE SEE "LOANS" ON PAGE 3



Today

6 In another Battle of Alberta showdown, our hometown hero Klondike Days faces off against the intrepid, globe-trotting Calgary Stampede.

8 The Black Halos are crazy, nasty, and mean. But they're no match for our crazy, nasty, and mean, yet tender and loving reporters.

Quote for the day

In order to make an apple pie from scratch, you must first create the universe.

— Carl Sagan, *Cosmos*

This day in the Gateway's history

Students' Council paid \$3500 to Peat, Marwick and Partners for phase 1 of a study into the viability of HUB's commercial tenants. Councillors claimed the report contained already foregone conclusions that "a group of students could have reached these conclusions with about twenty hours work."

1975

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Please recycle this newspaper

Breaking into the Food Bank

Jhenifer Pabillano
News Editor

Investigators are hungry to catch a Campus Food Bank thief who has been targeting food hampers for the past year.

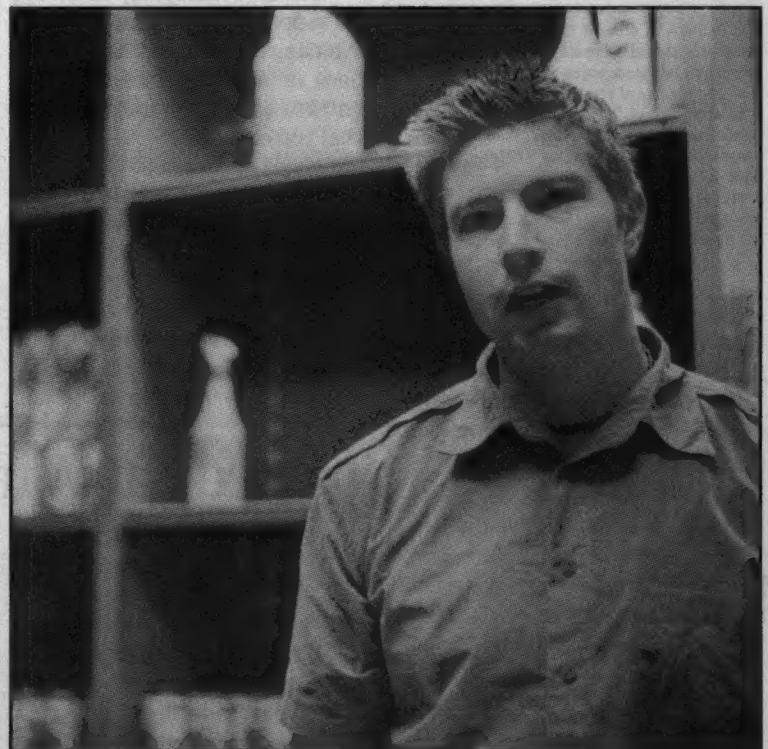
"It's sad, unfortunately, and frustrating for us," said Ron Ward, Director of Campus Food Bank. "They say that if someone steals they probably need it. But in this case, they're depriving others of food. It's wrong, and it shouldn't happen."

The Food Bank prepares paper bag hampers of food for more than 1400 clients. Hampers are left in

the hallway outside their SUB office for anonymous pickup by clients. The Food Bank has tried to maintain easy access to the hampers, but their open policy has become a key factor in enabling the thefts.

According to Ward, who believes the thefts are being committed by one person, the perpetrator first ripped into the hampers and took items they wanted in the hallway. However, when the Food Bank began to have the area monitored, the thief would take hampers away from the Food Bank and then take selected items. The remains of hampers would be found in nearby locations in the SUB basement.

PLEASE SEE "FOOD BANK" ON PAGE 2



Anna Carastethis / THE GATEWAY

Ron Ward, Director of Campus Food Bank

THE GATEWAY

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Policy makers struggle to tackle security issues

"ASSAULT" FROM PAGE 1

Dean Parthenis, a spokesman for the Edmonton Police Service, commented that the attack appeared "to be an isolated incident," and that "police have not had any other reports of similar incidents in the area."

Campus Security Director Al Belanger, concurred that the incident was surprising for the area and the isolated nature of the event has raised awareness among students in regards to their personal safety. "It was a random act in the area," Belanger said, emphasizing that students should feel some comfort in the knowledge that similar attacks have not been commonly reported on campus.

In the wake of the assault on the two women at the Faculté, students have begun to voice their concerns about safety on campus. A recent poll of students revealed many question their own vulnerability.

Liz, a third year Arts student who declined to give her last name, had concerns for her own personal safety. "I don't feel comfortable walking around campus by myself. Can Campus Security actually be expected to cover all areas at once?"

Second year Masters student in microbiology Shannon Hebert agreed that university security was a concern. "I feel OK," Hebert said, "But I wouldn't usually [walk around] by myself. I have my boyfriend come with me. Or a friend."

Belanger rebutted such claims

with strong insistence that Campus Security employs an effective presence at the U of A. "It is true that campus security cannot be everywhere at once, but the claim that security is weak on a whole is unfair."

Explaining that each area on campus has a regular patrol schedule, Belanger did acknowledge that security has been stepped up due to worries surrounding the recent attack. Campus safety, said Belanger, will continue to be handled by the University Security Service, and students should have every assurance that campus forces are effective.

"If a student has any problem with campus security I welcome an audience to speak with them."

City police have also commented that U of A students should have no problem with campus security. "It's unfortunate to hear that some students don't feel safe," said Parthenis. "If students do have issues with campus enforcement they must bring their concerns to security and U of A administration and detail not only concerns but also possible solutions. City police services would get involved if there were unresolved concerns."

Parthenis added, "To my knowledge there have been no problems with Campus Security. In fact, they've helped police on many occasions, including the incident last spring in which a gunman was found on the U of A campus grounds."

Faculté Student Council repre-



Karen McQuat / THE GATEWAY

Should the secluded areas at Faculté be given more attention?

sentative Lisa Clyburn is not sure of how to address the situation, but is sure something has to be done. Said Clyburn, "Council has been discussing putting a blue phone in the area but I am not sure it would have made a difference in this case." The Faculté Students' Association will meet to discuss possible safety solutions.

Despite the apparent rarity of the incident, sexual assault councillors within Edmonton want to emphasize the reality that other forms of sexual violations are not uncommon. "We must not underestimate how frequently sexual assaults occur," said Karen Smith of the Sexual Assault Center of Edmonton. "One in three females

and one in four males will be subject to some form of sexual violation before they are 18."

The difference with this case said Smith, was the fact that the assailant was unknown to the girls. "It is believed that 95% of sexual assault victims know their perpetrator on some level."

Smith also added that individuals could employ any number of safety precautions and still become a victim of some form of sexual violation. "The fact that the girls were walking in a pair, one safety recommendation we make, is case in point to prove that individuals can attempt to lessen the risk of an attack but can never guarantee they will not become a victim."

No suspects in Food Bank thefts

Campus Security at a loss for evidence

"FOOD BANK" FROM PAGE 1

"There's really no reason why they should do it," said Ward. "If you need extra items, you just have to ask. We'll set them up. If someone makes special requests, we do our best to cater to that."

But despite the monitors set up to apprehend the thief, the identity of the robber remains a mystery. Darcy Pennock, Operations Manager for Campus Security, said that there have been no suspects and no descriptions given of who may be committing the thefts.

"With food hampers, what are you supposed to do?" said Pennock. "We can recommend that they put them in a safer place, but that restricts access. It's tough to know what you could do."

Pennock commented that the perpetrator may not be a student from campus. "You'd like to think students aren't in that bad shape. More often, it's street people and street kids. You can always find a warm place to sleep here, which is part of the attraction. Plus there's the availability of food from certain

locations."

In the future, the impact of the thefts may extend past that of the families whose hampers have been taken. To prevent further incidents, Ward is worried the Food Bank will have to limit the anonymity

"We leave the hampers in the hallway to protect anonymity... We might have to set up appointments because of this guy, which we don't really want to do."

— Ron Ward,
Director, Campus Food Bank

of its clients. "We're a very anonymous organization. You only have to show your face once to register with a volunteer. We leave the hampers in the hallway to protect anonymity, and clients can pick them up at any time before 12. But we might have to provide a deterrent because of the thefts. We might have to set up appointments because of this guy, which we don't really want to do."

Tragedy at Windsor Car Park

Andra Olson

News Editor

A University of Alberta faculty member took his own life on campus this past Tuesday.

The man, who had been an associate professor in the department of Civil Engineering, entered the

Windsor Car Park on 116 Street and 91 Avenue and proceeded to an unspecified level of the multi-story building. Sometime between 1:00pm and 1:30pm the man jumped from the building.

Emergency response services were called to the scene but were unable to revive the man.

COUNCIL FORUM

Students' Council meets every second Tuesday at 6:00pm during the summer in the Council Chambers in University Hall. Council meetings are open to all students.

Students' Council has continued meeting throughout the summer. The following are highlights of events that have taken place during those meetings.

• **1 May** — Amy Salyzyn, Vice-President (Academic) described a new housing project currently in the early stages of planning. The International Centre of Living and Learning is proposed, Salyzyn explained, "to create a venue for international students to live with Canadian students, thus becoming better integrated." Plans for the building are to be completed throughout the summer.

• **4 July** — Upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee, council approved an expenditure not to exceed \$410 000 to further SUB expansion. Council minutes for the 4 July meeting read that the money, taken from the Building reserve Fund, will be used to "acquire the services of Henderson, Ingles and Partridge for the design consultation of the SUB expansion". An additional approval of \$ 5000 to pay RC Steffles Management Ltd for services already carried out in the expansion was also made in the same meeting.

• **10 July** — The Student Union External Affairs budget received an increase. Vice-President (Student Life) Jen Wanke's campaign promise to expand the VIDS program will be realized with the extended

funding.

When asked by Arts Rep Anand Sharma why the VIDS program is running a deficit this year when it ran surpluses in the past, Wanke replied "the current VIDS deficit should be viewed as an investment rather than strictly an expenditure." Wanke quotes the projected upgrade cost of the system to be \$27 000, "in order to improve visual quality, programming, flexibility and distribution." Wanke hopes upgrades will ensure the system will eventually generate revenue for the SU.

• **10 July** — Due to a high surplus, the University of Alberta's Access Fund's fees were cut with council approval. Also changed were Access operating policies. Council minutes for the 10 July meeting identified the changes were made "to ensure that more funds are allocated" to more university students.

• **24 July** — VP (Student Life) Jen Wanke informed Council that a list of volunteers submitted by the SU for World's events had not received any attention from event organizers. "We will be holding our own events in conjunction with the World's on 10-11 August. As well, members of the executive committee are sitting on various committees concerned with World's planning," said Wanke. "The University will be involved."

Compiled by Andra Olson

Foot and mouth disease kills bike path

Colleen Underwood
NEWS STAFF

As of 12 July, the bike path that runs through the University of Alberta Farm, south of Belgravia Road, has been temporarily closed, perhaps permanently.

The decision to close the trail, said University of Alberta Veterinarian Dr Dave Neil, was primarily due to the possibility of transmitting foot-and-mouth disease to the University's research animals by the large influx of international visitors during the upcoming World Games.

The recent addition of the Foote Stadium training facility, adjacent to the University Farm, brought attention to the potential problem.

Dr Gray, veterinarian for the Edmonton District of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, concurred with the decision to close the bike path, and said that "the University should be commended for the steps they have taken. We advised them about the bio-security to their animals a few months before about restricting access to the public."

He emphasized the risk of public contamination, from not only foot-and-mouth disease, but other domestic diseases too. "There is tremendous value in the research being conducted there," stated Gray.

Other reasons, stated Neil, included the overall rise in traffic utilizing the bike path, general security issues due to recent break-ins, and the increased amount of investment put into the station. The farm now has an estimated value at over \$50 million.

"Access is only via the 60th Avenue entrance, with manned security from 6 am to 7 pm, 6 days a week," said Neil. "There is limited access until the end of the



Kate Rossiter / THE GATEWAY

Pedestrian traffic through the U of A farm has been stalled due to fear of foot and mouth disease.

threat. The peak is right now, while people are coming into Edmonton. We feel very comfortable with the security in place."

But Lendrum community member, David Kirkham, a former frequent user of the bike path, maintained "[The University] has been wanting to do this for years and they didn't have the money before to build a fence. It is the secrecy and deception that I am upset with."

Kirkham claimed he heard nothing about the fences, or the permanent closure of the bike path, and was upset that farm administration did not consult with neighboring residents regarding their decisions about the bike path.

In defense of their decision to close, Neil stated that they had

to move quickly to properly deal with the potential threat during the Games. "The perimeter fence around the entire Edmonton Research Station unfortunately intervened with the bike path. We not only have a responsibility to the surrounding community, but to the agricultural community, too."

Neil also added that since there wasn't a quick enough response from the City of Edmonton to deal with this situation, they felt they had no alternative but to close the bike path.

Claire Stock, from the City of Edmonton Transportation and Streets Department, said that the city had acknowledged the issues behind the closure. However, if needed, it would not be possible to design a rerouting of the path

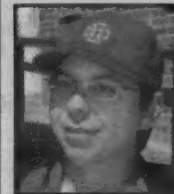
until next year. She suggests that after the Games, concerned Edmontonians should lobby for the path to remain open until an alternate can be designed.

"We won't say that this is a permanent shut down. We are reassessing the whole thing," noted Neil. He added that a decision-making task force is being formed, which will include a member of the surrounding community, to discuss the possibility of a slight rerouting of the bike path. They will begin meeting around the first week of August.

But for Neil, the health of the farm animals remains a priority, in combination with providing "some access to general public, and a re-established bike path with slight rerouting."

STREETERS

Do you feel safe
on campus?



Troy Nissen
Arts II

[I feel campus is safe]. I worked for CNS [Computer and Networking Services] and that was a big thing for them, cause you have to walk all around campus till like 10 o'clock at night. I had no problems with it. In some part, I think it's because I'm a guy. It might be a little weird for girls on the edges of campus, but when you're like walking past the Power Plant late at night, I don't see any reason why a girl would really feel too weird. Maybe if you go down to the River Valley or something, it might be sketchy.



Pachy Orellana
Arts IV

[I feel safe] during the day. But at night by myself it doesn't matter where I am, I don't feel safe. There are trees everywhere. Anybody could be hiding. Anybody could look like a student, you could pass by them in Quad. And at ten o'clock at night there's not a lot of people going by. [Lighting is insufficient] in some areas. I used to park in Windsor and we're in the ID [Industrial Design] studio which is right beside Stadium Car Park. I'd have to walk from Stadium to Windsor at night, and either I'd get someone to drop me off at my car, or I'd run like the wind on the way to Windsor. It's scary.



Cassandra Forsythe
Nutrition IV

I do. I don't know why, but I'm not scared. [Lighting is] OK but it could be bumped up. But light sometimes doesn't scare bad guys anyway, so who's to say it'll help. [I've never used Safewalk], because I'm not scared. I've walked home by myself at 10, 11 at night in the middle of winter. Watch me get attacked tomorrow or something, but it doesn't bug me, I don't know why.



Brent Leinan
Masters Science

Yes. I've been here for a very long time and never had any problems. But I guess there have been incidences. I was here before they cleared out all the trees in Quad so obviously there have been issues. The Faculté Saint-Jean is really a different entity in itself, so it's tough to compare [to main campus]. They've got the troubled youth home and everything right beside it. I think that for an attack like that, I could see that affecting women on campus. But for me I really can't see myself having any problems here or anywhere really.

Government says loan processing will be privatized

"LOANS" CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Clare Gautier-Villon, Director of Student Financial Aid and Information Centre (SFAIC), agreed: "It will be the same in terms of application and assessment. Where it differs is in who is processing the loan."

Students will, however, be getting more mail with the switch to Edulinx. Gautier-Villon said that Edulinx is committed to "in-studies communication" with students, where continual communication is maintained with the students during their academic career to notify them of the status of their loan and their options. "It's been used in the US, where they call it 'entrance and exit counselling', and it has lowered default rates on the loans there."

In addition, said Gautier-Villon, for U of A students applying for loans next year, all financial services will be set up in September in the Butterdome. "You won't have to go outside and go to the bank to get your loan signed. The money will still be in your account within 2 working days- there won't be any extra time."

Generally, Zwack has seen the change-over as a positive thing. The move, said Zwack, will be "removing the business aspect out of what we feel is a social program."

He also felt that the direct control of the government will enable the Students' Union to lobby interest rates more effectively.

"In the past, the banks had contracts with the government [with regard to interest rates], which of course were not negotiable. [The government] had no control over the interest rates. Now we can directly lobby the provincial government to decrease the interest rates, since changes can be implemented directly by the government."

But Gautier-Villon also added that "one thing about the change is that it just makes it more confusing for students, since the Canada Student Loans also changed in March. Now both are direct lending loans. But with all the switches, some people have up to five different loans from different institutions and that can be a lot of extra work."

Zwack also noted that since the program is still in its initial stages, some bumps will need to be sensibly navigated. "Edulinx is a brand new program. We're not sure how things will happen with the Canada Student Loans. Communication will probably be the biggest problem, but it's a new program and bugs need to be worked out."

U of A rises over Sun Microsystems

Steve Osadetz
NEWS STAFF

The University of Alberta's designation as the first "Sun Center of Excellence for E-Learning" by Sun Microsystems is a feather in the cap of the Computing and Networking Services (CNS) department.

In a Sun press release, Kim Jones, the company's vice president of global education and research said, "Sun chose the University of Alberta to be the center of excellence for e-learning because of its leadership in transforming the education environment today."

With 1100 courses using e-learning components catering to more than 100 000 enrollments, the U of A boasts the world's largest university e-learning program.

Sun Microsystems is the world's largest builder of computer servers and work stations, and is well known for their computer language, Java. According to their web site, Sun has \$19.2 billion in annual revenues, employs 37 000 people, and is active in more than 170 countries.

Michael Byrne, Director of the CNS department, described the new title and closer relationship with Sun as being "very positive, something which really doesn't restrict us in terms of our choice, but does give us an opportunity to

supplement the digital resources of the institution."

Byrne was careful to state that there was "no obligation or exclusivity" involved in the agreement. The University spends more than \$1 million per year on Sun hardware and software.

The new designation also includes a discount for the University that, according to Byrne, "effectively amounts to a 50 per cent discount with WebCT and a matching agreement with Sun." This means that the corporation will match every dollar the university spends on Sun products, essentially reducing e-learning product costs by half. The agreement only applies to hardware and software bought for the purposes of e-learning. WebCT is the software system that operates the bulk of the University's e-learning.

Susan Stein, the University's WebCT administrator, describes e-learning as the use of course content on the web that "enhances face-to-face courses so that students can have access to e-material at their convenience."

When asked about the university's future plans with respect to the application of e-learning, Anne Marie Decore, Associate Vice President Academic for the U of A said that there was "no doubt that we will expand what we are already doing in a very considerable way."

EDITORIAL

Daily papers justified in holding photos

Can it be assumed that the majority of people understand the difference between a professional newspaper and a newsletter?

Although this is a common assumption, many Edmontonians have simply neglected to realize this in the continuing debate over the two daily newspapers in Edmonton choosing not to publish the seized media coverage of the Canada Day riot. People are baffled and quite angry at the dailies who have both neglected to publish seized coverage.

Many defenders of the newspapers believe that if either paper were to run the seized photographs (in order for someone to hopefully identify one of the lawbreakers), the results of the paper's decision would be immediately felt by photojournalists on the streets.

This sounds probable, and the papers are worried about their photojournalists' safety. The photographers are not cowboys who throw their many cameras in the face of just anyone. They understand that documenting a riot is very dangerous. They constantly take calculated risks, hopefully leaving them unharmed. Not only do the photographers understand what is going on around them, the law breakers in the riot did as well. These people who were caught on

film knew immediately once they were draped with light from the photographers's flash that they now had a strong chance of being caught for their unlawfulness. Luckily, no accounts of photographers getting injured appeared on record.

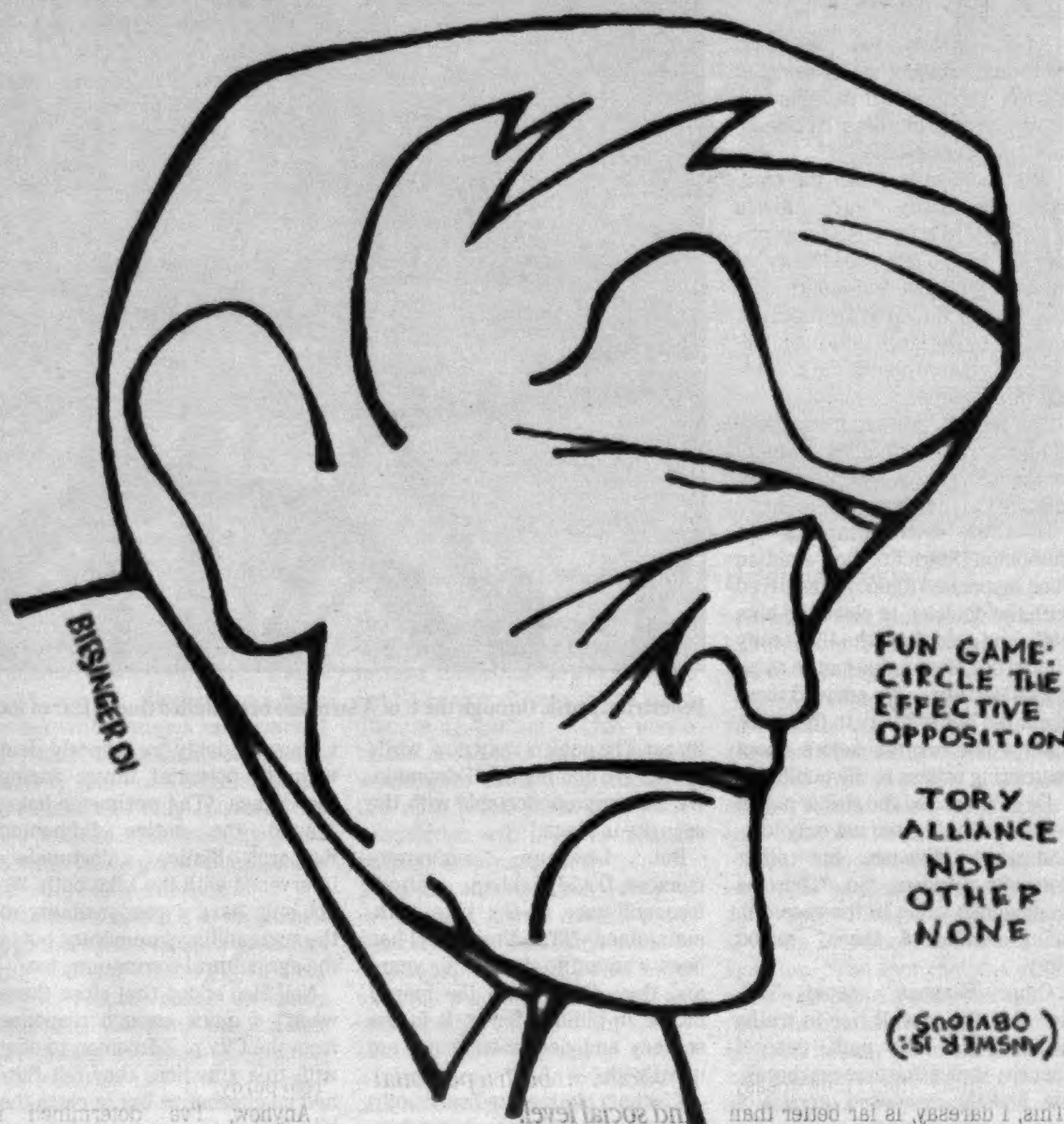
I cannot believe that a daily paper co-operating with the Edmonton Police Service will in any way increase the dangers that photographers face while on assignment in Edmonton. The danger exists in the initial taking of the photos.

The true reason of the daily papers defiance is political. Although the word "autonomy" has been used quite frequently in the office of the paper you're reading right now, I believe that papers do not want to publish anything on the grounds of pressure from a political body. Even if the *Journal* or *Sun* wanted to publish the confiscated photographs, they never would.

Co-operation with a political body is one thing, but the submission to a political body is an injustice to the public readers as it compromises the paper's integrity. The daily papers recognize this fact and value it. They simply do not want to be seen as someone else's newsletter.

Marcus Bence

PHOTO EDITOR



LETTERS

Money for helicopter better spent elsewhere

Although Edmonton is a great place to grow up and indeed a fairly nice place to live, there are certain things about this city that bother me. The most recent of these things to come to mind is the City's procurement of a police helicopter.

I'm not entirely sure why Edmonton's finest would need such a thing. I rarely, if ever, hear of a high-speed chase happening. In fact, if ever a high-speed chase were to occur, there really aren't any long stretches of road on which to chase or be chased. There's really only one freeway in this city and it seems like it's always backed up because someone lost a mattress off the back of their pick-up truck.

Perhaps the helicopter money would be better spent on solutions to the Whyte Avenue problem (which a police helicopter will certainly not solve), or if the citizens of Edmonton were so inclined, on a beautification program which would see more money spent on the upkeep of parks and recreation areas.

In a city as small as ours, I'm sure we can find a better way to spend this helicopter money which seems to be burning a hole in our collective pocket. Maybe we should spend that money to call an early election to finally get rid of that vile, ineffective toad-thing, Bill Smith.

ADAM ROZENHART
ARTS IV

Bill needs to go

I fuckin' hate Bill Smith. Bastard. I can't believe in a couple months we're gonna be faced with another three years of this retard leading our city. I saw him at the K-Days parade. He was wearing a cowboy hat while he and his wife were begging people to come to K-Days.

As if it was his K-Days, like K-Days was some fucking BBQ in his back yard. "Come on over, y'all, it's BYOB! Yeehaw!" Ack. Why are we cursed with such an array of fake folksey politicians in this province? Who believes that Smith isn't a penny-pinching codger, and that Ralph Klein hangs out with the boys? I'll betcha that fat bastard drinks Hoegaarden or something equally foreign and snooty.

But enough of Klein. I know. We're stuck with him forever. People really believe his fireside chats are from the heart, not written by some intern from Sherwood Park who'd get knifed if she ever used the word "folks." Yup, people love him, and he's sure smart enough not to go federal—the easterners like getting raped up the ass by suits, not hicks.

But Jesus! Won't anyone of substance stand up and challenge this guy? Robert Noce and Mike Nickel? Great, the same limiting, right-wing crap regurgitated by two slightly younger assholes.

But oh well, vote for them anyways! As long as they don't personally invite me to K-Days! In fact, hell, I'll campaign for them if they admit that K-Days sucks dead chicken farts and couldn't even hold a candle to the Red Deer Westerner Exhibition, never

mind an extravaganza by any other similarly-sized city.

So let's ditch this lame K-Days crap and go do something fun, like start a riot, or steal things.

KRIS MEEN
ALUMNUS

Safety isn't a concern

In light of the recent assaults on the Faculty campus, I question whether or not I feel safe when walking anywhere alone.

The riot on Whyte resulted in 18 additional police officers being placed in that area on Friday and Saturday night. Tickets for public rowdiness and jaywalking are being issued at an alarming rate. There are police on every corner.

However, there is a distinct lack of any anti-violence initiatives, particularly sexual violence. The police are quick to intervene when drunks are being too loud or pushing each other around, but no one is doing anything about what is being said. Walking down Whyte Avenue behind two police officers, I was yelled at by two men in a white sports car: "Hey, baby!" There was no reaction from the police.

Somehow, what those men said was acceptable. Was it because both were also white males and remembered those crazy Sunday nights cruisin' the strip? Possibly. However, I would question whether or not a female officer would be any more likely to raise her voice. The misconception seems to be that sexual assault must be physical. The damage done by shouted, lewd obscenities is just as pervasive as unwanted physical contact.

Given current conditions of the "protection" offered by law enforcement, I am increasingly aware of my inability to feel safe in well-lit, populated areas.

MEREDITH PORTER
ARTS III

Suicide a sign of negligent society

I can't imagine what one must be feeling moments before killing oneself. I hope I will never be in a position to find out. However, I think it is important for everyone to reflect on such events, because we live in a society that fears suicide.

Yesterday, a member of our university community decided to take his life. The reasoning behind his decision is unknown to me; it's likely unknown to everyone but him. But stop a second—take five minutes out of your hectic schedule and consider how every day we go about our routine, with our ups and downs, and spend far too much time locked in our individual "me worlds," and nowhere near enough time in human interaction.

This issue has really made me think lately. You see, a good friend of mine also took her life this past week, succumbing to a depression I cannot fathom.

Coupled with yesterday's events, it occurred to me that suicide is all around us, and yet we refuse to acknowledge such a morose social condition exists.

I say, wake up people! Pull your heads out of the sand and realize that these are our fellow students, our professors, our friends, our family who are coming to the end

of their rope. These people are us, and we are afraid.

We must do more for each other, making sure that those around us know our love, so that no one is so afraid that they would give up rather than bear another moment alone.

G LUCAS BAKAY
SCIENCE IV

Letters needed

As you may have noticed, many of the letters on this page have been written by the very same people who regularly contribute articles. This, of course, is bad. We shouldn't have to write our own letters, you folks out there should be writing them. It's totally easy, free, and some have reported an overwhelming rush of endorphins upon completion.

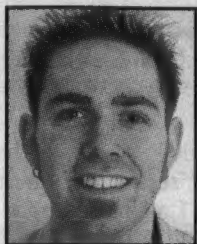
So get on that there computation device and hammer out your emotions and opinions onto a page, then send that page to us and we'll take care of the making-you-famous part. After all, it's our job.

Letters to the editor should be dropped off at room 0-10 of the Students' Union Building, or e-mailed to managing@su.ualberta.ca.

The Gateway reserves the right to edit letters for length and clarity, and to refuse publication of letters it deems racist, sexist, libelous, or otherwise hateful in nature.

Letters to the editor should be no longer than 350 words in length and include the name, student identification number, program, and year of study of the author, to be considered for publication.

Silly-looking helmets prevent stupid-looking head trauma



Adam Rozenhart

Although you can't really tell by the torrential rainstorms we've been having of late, summer is now in full swing.

And with the sun and random monsoons, summer also brings along hordes of people on bicycles, Rollerblades, scooters and riding lawnmowers. One can sit back and watch in quiet awe as these individuals ride and mow, respectively, with reckless abandon—the sort of careless disregard one masters during childhood.

Every summer I see it: stupid people on wheeled things ramming their heads into walls without wearing a helmet. These are probably the same people who juggle chainsaws, swallow swords or drink Mountain Dew: the big risk takers.

The excuses offered for not wearing a helmet are few and, on the whole, quite stupid. And they usually include concerns for style and economics.

Some people claim that helmets make them look silly. This excuse annoys me and makes me want to projectile vomit in abject terror. Others claim that they're worried about getting their hair messy. This, I daresay, is far better than landing headfirst on the pavement and ending up staring at your brain, now a full five feet away from you.

Having your mind on the outside of your body is a potential setback



Kate Rossiter / THE GATEWAY

This man, who is consequently not wearing a helmet, is riding his bike across a slightly busy road. Don't do that.

for anybody, on a personal and social level. However, you were dumb enough to not wear a helmet, thereby removing yourself from the gene pool, thus protecting future generations from such idiocy. While it may seem like you've done future Edmontonians a fantastic service, no one would ever believe that someone whose primary concern is their hairstyle could possibly be that selfless.

Having your brain on the outside of your body is a potential setback for anybody, on both a personal and social level.

Economics is another common excuse. Some people claim that the cost of a helmet is too much, since a decent cranial cover will likely put you out a whole 30 bucks.

I suggest looking at this from a different point of view: if you bail, thereby causing massive trauma to your brain, you'll be taken to a hospital (hopefully, if your friends don't hate you). The drugs and instruments used to fix you will probably cost well over \$4000 and that isn't even accounting for the man-hours involved in your repa-

ration. In light of this "revelation," if you're still worried about the thirty-dollar cost of a helmet you are either illiterate, very dumb, or you're just reading this article because you think my head box is "real purdy."

Anyhow, I've determined a means of enforcing the use of bike helmets. Ready? Holding your breath?

Someday, when I'm wealthy (which I hope to achieve by cramming a clock into an already

existing product like a shoe or something), I plan to buy a vast number of bike helmets and stock them all in an ice-cream van. I will then drive down local streets and every time a rider passes by with no protective covering on his melon, I'll lean out the window and throw one of my many helmets at said rider as hard as I can. Not only do they get a free helmet, but they're also the victims of a bizarre and seemingly random assault at the hands of some guy in a van wearing Nike "Clock" shoes, undoubtedly teaching them a harsh but important lesson.

That lesson? Despite how expensive you think it is or how stupid you'll look, there's nothing dumber or more expensive than spraying your brains all over the pavement in front of my house. Except how much I'll charge you to clean it up, jerkass.

THE BURLAP SACK

This beating is sent out to all the females out there who haven't learned to flush a toilet yet.

Girls! There's a lever on the back of the damn thing, and it's there for a reason.

But wait. Far be it from me to make such claims without some filthy, ammonia-filled evidence (read: a woeful tale of epic proportions shall now commence).

I took a jaunt down to the women's washrooms in the Business building, hoping to relieve my bladder of some newly processed liquids. But upon entering said washroom, I was pleased to note that half of the stalls contained unflushed liquids and toilet paper remnants floating contentedly in their porcelain palaces. I shook my head, peed in a flushed stall, and went on my way. But the lesson of the day had already left its indelible impression.

I am completely amazed that young ladies of a student nature could possibly sit down on a toilet, finish their business, and simply walk out without giving the remains of the transaction a thought.

How can you exit a stall leaving large, oddly-coloured friends backstroking in the bowl? I mean, you made it into university, girls. You'd think that would insinuate some kind of smarts for common human decency. Good grief ... Who are these people?

JHENIFER "2000 FLUSHES" PABILLANO

The Burlap Sack is a semi-regular feature where, a person or group who needs to be put in a sack and beaten, is ridiculed in print. No sack beatings are actually administered. Unless I get a hold of you. Then you'll wish you flushed. Use yer foot, neanderthal!

The diagnosis: Edmonton certifiably insane



Kris Meen

Edmonton is a city that suffers from a multiple personality disorder.

The dominant personality is that of the City of Champions. A big sports town.

Of course, this harkens back to the day when Edmonton could legitimately claim to be that. A time when the Oilers were the most kick-ass team in the only sport that really matters; a time when the Eskis ran rampant in the little Canadian Football League that could.

Reality has set in though. The Oilers have just lost their best player, again, due to their existence as a small-market team. They'll never be champions again. The Eskis? Well, they could potentially be great again, but somehow, they just ... aren't.

To make up for this lack of champion-icity, the city seems hell-bent on filling the hole with unpopular, second-tier sporting events.

The "big" one this summer is the World's. The track and field championship that mysteriously refuses

to call itself that.

There are so many tickets left unsold that I makes one wonder if there will be anyone watching at all. The rest of the world will wait happily for the 2004 Olympics to find out who the fastest man in the world is.

In other words, the City of Champions is desperate and deluded.

We also got the World Triathlon Championships, the great big event in a sport that even Canadians wouldn't care about had Simon Whitfield not won the gold last year.

The latest gasp is an attempt to get some swimming championships. And all this while dozens of local millionaires and politicians trip over themselves to save the perpetually doomed Oilers.

In other words, the City of Champions is desperate and deluded.

Another side to Edmonton's personality is that of the Festival City, an aspect that I have only recently begun to be aware of, aside from the ubiquitous Fringe.

My most recent discovery was Shakespeare in the Park. Truly, an excellent experience. I understand Shakespeare barely better now than I did in ninth grade, but there is still nothing like watching the climax of *Richard III* while a thunderstorm rolls over the trees

surrounding Hawrelak Park.

Last year it was the jazz festival. Cool. Next week I'm going to try out the Folk Festival. I can't wait to see what I discover next year.

Regardless, this poor, insane City of Champions still gets first billing. That's what's on the sign when you come in from any highway into the city. That's the phrase blurted out by so many of our city's bigwigs, including Mayor Smith, our fake cheerleader (who is actually, in case you didn't know, a grumpy old fart).

What if all the time, effort and money that went to keep that dying horse on its feet went instead to making Festival City even more vibrant and vital than it already is—towards making the rest of the country and the world aware of the excellent arts scene here in E-town? To give the name "Edmonton" a world-renowned reputation that could be spoken in the same breath as Edinburgh, Florence, New Orleans, or Stratford.

So that people would speak blissfully about the opportunity to come to our magical city. And American sportscasters wouldn't have the opportunity to groan lamentably for the poor second-liner from Florida being sent up to do a couple years time in the tundra.

I mean, wouldn't the reality of being a renowned Festival City be better than the illusion of being the City of Champions?

SUPERPOLL 3000!

If you were to receive an anonymous package containing 56 plastic dolls bearing your likeness with their hair cut down to a few millimeters and their eyes blackened out with a Jiffy Marker, what type of non-alcoholic beverage would you have a sudden craving for?

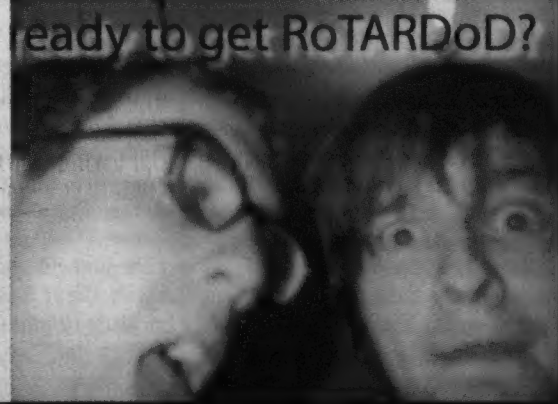
LOG ON TO [HTTP://WWW.UALBERTA.CA/~MMM/POLL.HTML](http://www.ualberta.ca/~mmm/poll.html) TO SUBMIT YOUR RESPONSE!

Mark McIntyre's SuperPoll 3000! is a semi-regular feature that takes interest in you, the reader. That's right, we care about you and your opinions. Please write as much or as little as you want in your response. Explanations for your answer are encouraged, though not strictly enforced. All respondents will retain anonymity, so I can't find you and spray Windex in your eye if you write something that makes me sad. Results will be published in a future issue of the Gateway.

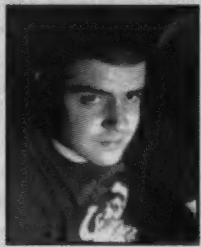
Are you ready to get RoTARDoD?

- Point:
- The Gateway is a nothpaph.
 - The man on the right is dead.
 - Skip doesn't make faces like this too often.

So:
Volunteer at
THE GATEWAY—
for maximum fun.



Even easily-impressed kids hate Klondike Days



Neal Ozano

Hey, kids! Have you ever wondered what the difference between the Calgary Stampede and Klondike Days in Edmonton was? No? Too bad! Lets compare, because I've been to both.

The Calgary Stampede has Conklin rides, creepy ride operators, zit-faced crooked midway game operators, overpriced food, cows, horses, llamas, and throngs of pseudo-Western dipshits in cowboy hats.

In Calgary, the entire city fills its pants with cowboy pride for a week and a half. Stampede specials happen in stores, free Stampede breakfasts pop up in every convenient venue, and Stampede colostomies are available at every privately-run Calgarian hospital. People staple less-important children to the benches along the Stampede parade route weeks in advance to hold a spot, hoping to catch a glimpse of Calgary's mascot, Mooey the Cow. Most do. Soon after, they ride the same rusty Conklin rides they've ridden for the past 120 lame years, for an average of \$57 per ride.

At the end of it, people feel the true roots of their city have been showcased through their endless presentation of cows, cows, and



Philip Head / THE GATEWAY

Carnies: a great reason to avoid K-Days like you'd avoid Hitler on PCP.

more cows. Boring.

Klondike Days, in attempts to distance itself from the Stampede, has Conklin rides, creepy ride operators, zit-faced crooked midway game operators, overpriced food that usually gives me strep throat, less livestock, more teen pregnancy, and infinitely less people.

In Edmonton, nobody lines the streets for the Klondike Days parade. Vagrants scramble for the peanuts thrown from decrepit floats by questionably beautiful beauty queens—notably Miss Redwater and the Ponoka Canola Queen—while children cry and desperately attempt to escape the lazy-eye gaze of Klondike Mike.

Major newspapers spend the entire week speculating how much lower attendance will be on the midway at this years Klondike Days, while most 16-year-old kids, and every emphysema-ravaged

senior citizen in the city line up to lose all \$58 of their week's pay in the nickel slots while inhaling amounts of second-hand smoke even the Kyoto Accord isn't ready to deal with.

People in Edmonton wonder what the Klondike has to do with Edmonton, considering the gold rush happened 120 years ago, 2000 miles north of the city, but then quickly stop caring.

So, to sum things up, Calgary's Stampede focuses mainly on cows, while Edmonton's Klondike Days has no discernable focus at all. Both are expensive, neither are entertaining, and, odds are, Canadian rock zombies 54-40 are playing for small change at both.

For better entertainment in either city, drink paint thinner, tape your eyes open, and flick a light switch on and off until you wake up in a pool of your own vomit.

Where exactly is the 'safe' end of town, anyway?

Erika Thorkelson

I vividly remember the fear I felt walking down 107 Avenue late at night, my hands trembling when I fumbled with the keys to my locked-up-like-a-safe building front door. I tried to believe at the time that the feeling was unjustified, but every time a car slowed down beside me, I knew it wasn't.

Really, the only difference between the wasted stranger on Whyte looking for a hoochie and the trolling john on 107 Avenue looking for a prostitute, is that at least the john is going to pay.

It all came to a head one night when I was walking home from a friend's house. Clad unattractively in combat pants and a heavy winter jacket, I was nevertheless an attractive target for the old man slowly trolling the street. When he leaned out the window and asked how much, I was incensed.

This had happened too many times to be tolerated. I gave him the finger.

Rejected, he pulled his head quickly in the window and hit the gas. I thought he was just going to speed away but to my chagrin, he pulled in to the street about half a block away from me. I panicked and, for a split second, was

bombarded by visions of being kidnapped, raped, and murdered. I thought I might end up a torso in a suitcase at the river's edge, like that poor girl who walked into the wrong Rosie's Bar and Grill one night.

He drove away moments later, but it was enough to keep me from walking alone at night for the rest of my time downtown.

Not long after, I moved to Old Strathcona because it was supposed to be safe. Imagine my surprise when I discovered that the simple act of walking home down Whyte Avenue would illicit the same harassment I had tried to escape.

I'm not going to go on a rant about the bars—we've all heard it too many times—what bothers me is the basic lack of respect. What is it in the pea-sized brain of your average, "I AM Canadian" gear-wearing jock that makes him believe I want to share in a slurred conversation with him and his half-cut friend? Furthermore, does he really believe this exchange will lead to intercourse?

Perhaps he believes that, at some point, one of the girls he says, "hey gorgeous" to will respond with, "Oh baby, you're hot. Please fuck me blind."

Really, the only difference between the wasted stranger on Whyte looking for a hoochie and the john trolling on 107 Avenue looking for a prostitute, is that at least the john is going to pay.

The World's to bring out the best in Edmonton—for a whole week



Chris Boutet

If you ever ask someone where in town they live and they reply, "I live downtown," stop the conversation, lift the person on your lap, and gently rock them until they stop sobbing.

Because they're not just telling you what area they're from to make polite yet unstimulating small talk—no, what they're really saying is, "I live in my own personal fucking hell, each day I awake welcoming my own death."

In case some of you don't already know, I live on 105 Street and 98 Avenue—a location some might consider to be just on the fringe of actual downtown. But it doesn't feel like it.

Although I might not live above one of our "No Knives" bars in the colourful Hookertown district or in Stab County (otherwise known as Braithwaite Boyle), I still get to enjoy all the perks of residing in such locales.

I get everything from cases of empty beer bottles to bicycles stolen off my porch on a regular basis, I get the heady thrill of finding old condoms and needles strewn just blocks away from where I sleep, and of course I also have access to the perk of watch-

ing street crime go down with frightening regularity as I walk to work. I guess Mayor Smith is right: Edmonton certainly is a "world-class city"—at least on par with Flint, Michigan or Vancouver's east side when it comes to grossness and danger levels.

"Okay," you're saying, "Granted, downtown isn't the safest place to live in Edmonton, but at least there's lots of things to do, right? Right? Hello?"

Oh, sure, there are tons of things to do downtown. You can do heroin. Or you can run from the prostitutes-turned-muggers who camp out on the steps of the Freemason's Hall on 103 Street. Or just to mix it up, you can watch them tear down a historic building to make room for another ImPark lot. Yeah, it's a veritable wonderland of possibility exploding before your eyes.

Huh? Oh, sure, there are tons of things to do downtown. You can do heroin. Or you can run from the prostitutes-turned-muggers who camp out on the steps of the Freemason's Hall on 103 Street.

Or just to mix it up, you can watch them tear down a historic building to make room for another ImPark lot. Yeah, it's a veritable wonderland of possibility explod-

ing before your eyes.

Hey, I wonder if our city councillors have ever worked in the "suck factor" when they're trying to figure out why no one shops, hangs out, or walks slowly downtown?

It seems the city planners have tried everything from getting rid of all the one-way streets to the ludicrously non-functional Downtown Dollar (which I still haven't encountered a real-world use for), in order to revitalize our pathetic core. What they don't seem to realize is that people don't come downtown simply because one-way streets scare them or they hate using real money to ride the LRT; they avoid downtown because it offers them nothing that they can't get in a better area, like Whyte Avenue, or Calgary.

Sure, downtown has some nice bars, like The Druid, or New City Likwid Lounge, but Whyte has that, too—with free parking, I might add. The Legislative Grounds are beautiful in the summer, but so is Hawrelak Park. And shopping? Eaton Centre pales in comparison to Kingway or West Edmonton Mall.

And out of all these, the bars are the only thing that could possibly draw people here after five o'clock—but the Downtown Business Association dedicates all their time to trying to get them shut down.

It should occur to them that until the city is willing to put a cop on every corner, there will always be crime and vandalism downtown, even if there wasn't a single underage rave kid walking the streets

after midnight. And besides, if the Cecil and the Grand Hotel can operate downtown, so Lush and Therapy should enjoy the same right.

The point of all of this angry meandering is this: with this "World's" thing rearing its gigantic head above our dubious little burg, we'll all get to pretend—if only for a week—that there's nothing wrong with our city, much in the same way Atlanta got to pretend it wasn't a crime-infested rat-hole for the duration of the 1996 Summer Olympics.

There will be police on every corner, the homeless will be herded unceremoniously out of sight, and everywhere, people will be smiling and speaking of Edmonton as Canada's best-kept secret: the Festival City, the City of Champions, and so on.

But after it's all over and the high wears off, when the police helicopter flies off to a city that can actually afford one, everything will be back to normal.

I think it's a real testament to Edmonton's financially crippling urban sprawl that the mayor is only willing—or fiscally able—to attempt cleaning up this city when company calls, and then let it all fall back into its original place when the world stops looking. To someone who has to live here, it shows a lot of contempt to Edmonton's citizens.

And the simple fact remains that I would rather be slapped in the face with a wet sack of dead cats than hang out in my own neighborhood.

Does that sound like something you would hear from a citizen of a world-class city to you?

Dave Alexander's **TOP TEN** Ways to improve Klondike Days

- 10 More fun lovin' carnies and less stabbin' carnies.
- 9 Put a sign on the Gravitron that reads "Seniors Rest Area."
- 8 Make lost children work at the Mini-Donut stands.
- 7 Loan application desks set up at the entrance for customers who want to stay for the afternoon.
- 6 Guess the carnie's arrest record and win a tetanus shot.
- 5 Get the really good Canadian bands like Harlequin, Foghat, and Streetheart.
- 4 Lock the doors to the casino and shut off the ventilation system.
- 3 Bring an armoire; get in for free.
- 2 Instead of having a haunted house, scare people with a chilling tour through a carnie's trailer.
- 1 Keep it honest and re-name it the "Dangerous, Over-priced, Hygiene-Deficient, Fighting Teenager Exhibition."



SUMMER IN BRIEF

Alberta makes the Grade

The University athletic teams have set a new standard in academics with 107 Academic All-Canadians.

To qualify for the award, athletes must maintain an 80 per cent average in a full-time course load while competing at the CIAU level.

Pandas Rugby, Hockey and Wrestling, along with Bears Soccer, all had a very high percentage of players honoured.

Football schedule released

The Bears' regular season schedule is as follows:

at Calgary	31 Aug	19:00
vs Regina	8 Sept	15:00
at UBC	14 Sept	19:00
at Manitoba	22 Sept	13:00
vs Sask	29 Sept	13:30
vs Calgary	13 Oct	13:30
at Regina	20 Oct	14:00
vs UBC	27 Oct	13:30

Postseason:

West semi-final	3 Nov	TBA
West final	10 Nov	TBA
Churchill Bowl	17 Nov	TBA
Vanier Cup	1 Dec (Toronto)	

Bet you didn't know...

Though several notables have moved from CIAU hockey to the NHL, perhaps the only player to move the other way is newly appointed Brandon Wheat Kings coach Dean Clark.

Clark played one non-memorable game with the Edmonton Oilers during the 1983-84 season. Later, Clark laced up for the Green and Gold, putting up a respectable 33 points as a defenceman during the 1986-87 CIAU season.

Canadians pull curtain on IAAF contingent

Collin Gallant
SPORTS EDITOR

Stressing a progressive approach that will build experience and (hopefully) future medal totals, Canadian Track and Field head coach Les Gramantik revealed Canada's roster for the upcoming International Amateur Athletic Federation championships.

"The size of the team this year allows us to identify talent for future success," said Gramantik at the team's unveiling last Tuesday.

"I'm looking forward to bringing in young athletes, who are competing for the first time at this level who will help us tremendously in the long run."

Accordingly, a number of athletes will be making their international debuts at the "World's." Singled out by Gramantik were Shane Niemi (400m), Dylan Armstrong (hammer throw), and Scott Russel (discus).

"[The three] are very young and very talented and they will benefit tremendously from the opportunity," said Gramantik, "but let's face it [without the event being held locally] these three would not be at the world championships."

Medal production is a top priority for Gramantik, but not as a means unto itself.

"I would like to see good results, not only by medals [won] but by the athletes accomplishing personal bests."

More specifically, Gramantik is looking for strong performances in highjump, women's relay and the throwing events, especially from Olympian Jason Tunks in the discus.

"If I can see a number of our team reaching into the top eight, that makes our job easier for next time," said Gramantik.



Courtesy the U of C Gauntlet

Canadian Track and Field head coach Les Gramantik prepares to field the strongest team in years.

CIAU represented in Canadian IAAF line-up

Collin Gallant
SPORTS EDITOR

While Canadian team head coach Les Gramantik may be familiar to Canada West track fans several athletes have a CIAU connection also.

Gramantik, the University of Calgary's head track coach has three national titles under his belt and was named coach of the year in 1999 when his men's team won their second straight championship.

Gramantik also served as a coach on the last three Olympic teams, specializing in combined events, throws and the pole vault—the

event in which he competed internationally for his home country of Romania.

He has also coached numerous world and commonwealth teams.

Jeremy Deere

Another recognizable name on the roster is Jeremy Deere, the host entry in the 5000m.

A former member of the U of C team, the middle-distance runner seemingly owned the Canada West 3000m in the late '90s.

In Edmonton, however, Deere will need to improve on his best 5000m time of 13:38.31 to find the podium.

The three-time CIAU champion-

ship Athlete of the Meet graduated from the U of C in 1999.

Lami Oyewumi

A strong sprinter, Oyewumi helped the University of Toronto Blues to a pair of runaway championships in '97 and '98, will take up the third leg of the Women's 4x400m relay.

In three visits to CIAU nationals Oyewumi consistently placed in each of her four events, the 60m, 300m, the 4x200m relay, and the 4x400m relay.

In 1998 she anchored a Blues relay team that won the 4x200m helping the U of T take the meet by 39 points.

New soccer coach settles into job

Vandergift takes Pandas' helm for absent Tracy David

Collin Gallant
SPORTS EDITOR

Kelly Vandergift's office still shows the telltale signs of juggling staff; it's full of swimming paraphernalia left by the former occupants. The décor is not entirely appropriate for a soccer coach, but as she simply says, "we're working on it."

Offices aside, the Pandas' new soccer coach is not out of place at the U of A.

During in her playing days with the Pandas, Vandergift was a stand-out midfielder, a four-time Canada West all-star selection and the leading scorer in 1992.

She completed her five years of eligibility with three trips to the nationals and one banner before graduating with her degree in Physical Education.

The Sherwood Park native held the head-coaching job at Grant MacEwan College before moving back across town to become an assistant to Pandas coach Tracy David.

When David announced she would be taking a two-year sabbatical at the end of last season, Vandergift stepped up to fill the vacancy.

She is inheriting a team that went 3-6-1 last season, winding up fourth in Canada West. The team flared-up in the play-offs beating the dreaded rival Calgary Dinosaurs on penalty kicks only to lose 1-0 in the final to Victoria.

She speaks freely of the problems of last season: "We didn't generate enough goals," says Vandergift matter-of-factly. "For the amount of opportunities we created in the season we didn't score nearly as often as we should have."

For now, she's concentrating on formations, a 4-4-2 system bringing the midfielders into the fray and generating needed offence.

The rookie coach believes the new formation will be key depending on how the players fill in the positions.

"If the system is played correctly—the way I envision us playing it—it will allow the mid-field

to get into the attack more. I even want the defence bringing it in. That said, we need to keep the ball out as well."

The new coach finds herself in the enviable position of having all but two starters returning. With highly touted recruit Christina Kahlina slated to add speed in the backfield, Alberta should come into the year strong.

Vandergift is expecting the whole team to step up with a big effort to get out of a tough Canada West division.

One point in the Pandas' favour is the close location of this year's Canada West final, namely the newly opened Eldon Foote Field. The new stadium will see all Panda home games and give the Pandas a host berth in the CanWest finals.

In the more immediate future, the team will be holding try-outs and a mini-camp 20, 22 and 24 August, with the pre-season starting 8 and 9 September at the University of Saskatchewan.

The regular season starts 14 September in Calgary.



Philip Head / THE GATEWAY

Coach Vandergift, sporting her 1989 National Championship sweater, is hoping to guide this year's Pandas soccer team back to glory.

Black Halos go to war for their rock 'n roll

GIG PREVIEW

Black Halos
with The Offspring and
Millencolin
Northlands Agricom
29 July

Heather Adler
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT STAFF

These days there's not a lot of soldiers left defending the once great hoodlum-cherished bounty of girls, booze, tattoos, and punk rock, but those still left gripping the rebel flag with their snotty little in-your-face fists are putting up one hell of a battle. Meet Vancouver's warriors of hardcore, The Black Halos. Since their inauguration in 1994 the quintet of urban-punk brats have been waging an all out war for their music and their undeniable devotion all things power-chord inspired.

"I'm not sure that mass destruction follows us wherever we go but there's definitely a black cloud that follows us behind our van," laughs Black Halos' guitarist Rich Jones as he reminisces about just a few of the bands recent hooligan inspired adventures.

From European street brawls to dangerous onstage mishaps, the Halo boys have survived it all with nothing but a smile on their faces and a two-six of poison in their hands.

"We were playing an outdoor festival in Bastille, which is the northern part of Spain where there were all these mass separatists, and we were drinking in the town. All of the sudden there were all these bombs and stuff going off. It was



pretty intense. There were police there in the full riot gear kicking the crap out of people. We could see the crowd was getting fire bombed and Molotov Cocktails were flying. Basically a huge riot broke out and our tour manager comes over to us and goes 'it's war we gotta go!' It was totally weird."

In true rock-warrior form, the boys would go on to play the show once the pesky civil unrest died down a bit and gave the kids something else to get really excited about.

Fitting of their name, it seems where the Black Halos go, trouble follows. They make no apologies for putting their "big sweaty stinky rock n' roll extravaganza" before silly things like personal safety.

With a lead singer who goes by the name Billy Hopeless and is known to roll around half-naked in his own spit, it's pretty obvious these guys know how to push the limits.

"Billy has a nice scar on his face from getting smashed in the head with a bass. It just kinda happened when we got out of hand at a gig," Rich continues. "I put my guitar through the roof at a club a few months ago and I've had problems with it ever since."

That's right, kids, this isn't the that glitter-punk with style ripped off from the classics and made palatable for trendy Le Chateau blouses. The Black Halos are cranking out the kind of music that makes your ears bleed for those amps' sweet distortion to rock you

a little harder with each increasingly urgent note.

It's taken buckets of sweat, blood, and tears, to get these corrupted Canadian lads this far. Recently they landed a coveted spot on this year's Warped Tour and they are now on the road with über-popular mainstream punkers The Offspring. With their hard hitting sophomore release, *The Violent Years*, the band shows no sign of fatiguing any time soon.

So rest assured there is plenty of time left for them to fuck your mom, shave your dog, and steal your bike as they continue the punk invasion. All they ask is you refrain from throwing beer bottles at them if for some reason you don't dig their set.

Classical musicians fight battle against MS

GIG PREVIEW

Fundraiser for Multiple Sclerosis
Convocation Hall
29 July

Karen Hackenbrook
Vanessa McLeod
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT STAFF

Searching for an elite evening of entertainment and education? If so, you may want to attend the Fundraiser Concert for Multiple Sclerosis presented by elitO, a newly formed intellectual student organization. The concert line-up features a range of musical styles including classical, contemporary and Elizabethan performed by a roster of talented musicians including the String Bean Quartet, Violinist Mark Van Manen, and local singer and songwriter Bryce Kulak.

Besides treating the audience to an evening of "stellar performances" which includes original classical compositions as well as a show-tune ballad performance by Bryce Kulak, the evening will also include a presentation on Multiple Sclerosis by a group of leading MS researchers.

By raising awareness for Multiple Sclerosis, elitO, hopes to make public their club's desire to actively contribute to the community through shared experiences and the enrichment of people. "The world is full of need and support," says elitO co-founder Crystal Kerr. The organization believes community involvement is of high importance and their decision to organize a fundraiser concert provides an optimum opportunity for getting involved.

The founders are very familiar with Multiple Sclerosis, as Crystal's mother has the disease, and wanted to make a contribution to a cause that hits close to home. "Although elitO does not claim to be the totalizing answer to every single transgression on the human race, it does attempt to recognize and lend, in it's own way, to the relief of such problems."

A small reception and silent auction will follow the musical gala. If any students are interested in becoming involved with elitO, they are invited to attend the concert or check out their web page: <http://www.ualberta.ca/~crystalk/elito.htm>. As for future activities "once we start recruiting new members, we hope to get their input and involve other people in the staging of another event."

Whether you are interested in joining the organization, want to support a worthy cause or simply want a culturally stimulating night out, be sure to leave a space on your calendar to attend this weekend's concert.

Design students show off their work to the world

ART REVIEW

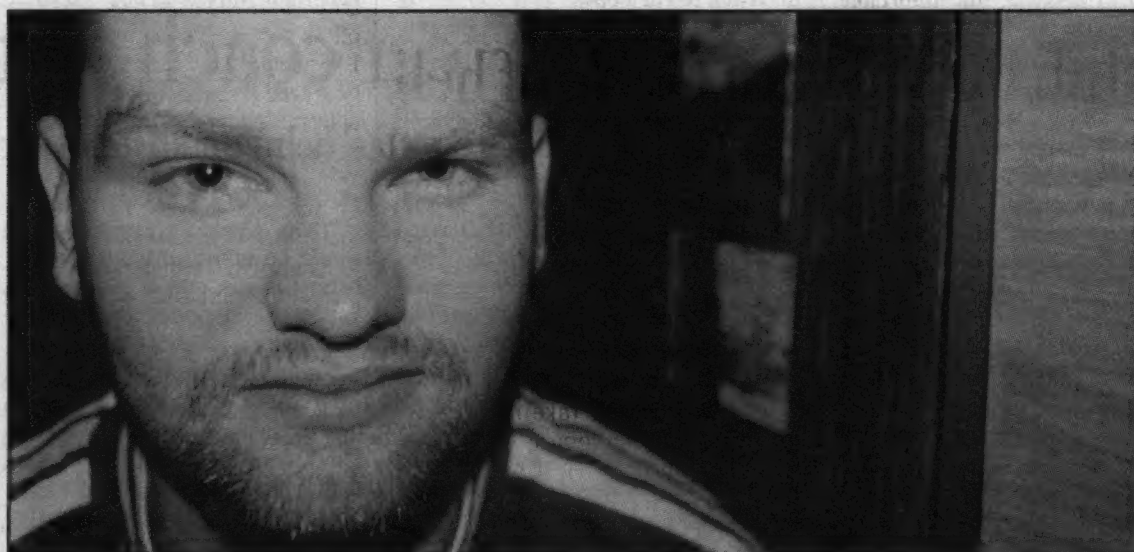
Fast Forward 2001
Fine Arts Building
24 July-12 August

Lindsey Whitson
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT STAFF

Ever wonder as to what's being created in the art studios or within the homes of U of A Art and Design students? Interested in spending a half-hour or two wandering through the mosaic of works by the afore-mentioned artists? If you answered affirmatively to one or both of these questions, take the time to stop in at the FAB Gallery in order to experience Fast Forward 2001.

There is a vast spectrum of talent on display at Fast Forward. With no single theme connecting the various works of art, and yet there is nothing haphazard about their placement. Subdued mingles with lively, just as the abstract hints at the concrete. A particularly interesting addition is Erroll Brager's inclusion of not only the product of his tools, but the tool itself- both constituting art.

Another artist, Nick Smolinski, highlights the importance of old ideas giving way to new creativity.



Erroll Brager displays himself with his art at Fast Forward 2001

"I went to the studio and basically just drew off the top of my head and tried to get back to the work as physically as possible and just attack it. It's extremely physical."

Fast Forward 2001 is the result of last year's successful summer showcasing of graduate work. As a non-profit exhibition, curator Jetske Sybesma sees this show as 'aiming to promote our young artists by allowing the collectors and general public to see what is up-and-coming.'

Sybesma cites the World Track

and Field Championships as a great opportunity for the students, in that their endeavors are on display when people are from all over the world are flooding the university. "If you want to take a souvenir from Edmonton," says Sybesma. "why don't you buy art?"

This is, however, not simply an opportunity to present U of A talent to the world as a whole, but introduce it into the lives of everyone, especially the student body. Unlike Engineering or Chemistry students, the Art and Design grad-

uates have available to them a means of showcasing their work to a vast spectrum of viewers.

Beyond its accessibility, art allows subjective interjection, which opens itself to both the educated critic as well as the uninitiated, such as myself.

The artists provide a statement regarding their works, which both explains the pieces and generates a contrast to one's own response. This melding of personal opinion and artist's intent allows for a well-rounded artistic experience.

Leo Wong/ THE GATEWAY

Gay Winnipegers battle boredom with debauchery in *Hey Happy!*

MOVIE PREVIEW *Hey Happy!*

Directed by Noam Gonick
Starring Jeremie Yuen, Craig Aftanas, and Clayton Godson
Metro Cinema
8pm, 27 July, 7pm and 9pm,
28-29 July

Kelly Korpesio
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT STAFF

What the hell is a gay guy to do in Winnipeg? Two things. One, follow the finger-waving, Mother of Philosophy and set goals. If that makes you groan, you can party, and inhale whatever sensual beverage you dig. Sabu, the movie's prostitute protagonist does both. His mission is to fuck 2000 guys.

With the help of the Winnipeg rave scene and his "outdoor used porn market", Sabu manages to dish it with 1999 dudes from the dumpy prairies. But, don't worry boys and girls, these are no Garbage Pail kids. There are plenty of gratuitous, lusty nude shots of hot men. The aim is to tempt Sabu

into straying from his noble quest to conquer the virtuously chaste, overall wearing, Happy. The result is eye candy for the audience.

Sabu's challenger is a wannabe-satanic, pierced freak named Spanky Godson. He has a stereotypically flamboyant day job, making up the old, farmer's wives with a cutting crew of fat, Asian, lesbian hairdressers. Off-hours they stalk the plains to harass people with mean talk and ugly faces. This flaming lad sports painful-looking costumes, complete with dozens of piercings but his image is brought into question by an ironic twist at the end.

Sabu's love story is simple, but the rest of the story is not. Clarity is compromised by needlessly obscene and seemingly irrelevant actions, such as the rape scene. The rejected Spanky kidnaps Happy and throws him onto a grey, hospital cot, cuts him open and progressively pierces his intestines with a big gold hoop. Talk about a sado-masochistic complex. This guy will not admit defeat. And, as if Spanky hasn't asserted his power enough, he gives Happy a cucumber salad,

of sorts, by bending his victim over and pulling off the cucumber sheath to reveal a slimy dildo. What phallic fun!

The plot runs out of traditional story-telling techniques, like a screenplay, which results in transparent dialogue. The alternative game plan is to give the audience an assortment of nudes, porn, drugs and dancing.

The way I see it, the gay men

of Manitoba are bored and in need of entertainment and like many people who spend too much time in places surrounded by grass (and tend to smoke it a lot), they believe in aliens. Happy is the biggest believer and is so preoccupied with his short wave radio that he forgets about his fellow earthlings. He is so oblivious that he doesn't even notice the two men trying desperately to get with him.

Meanwhile, back on Earth, the weather threat is exaggerated to apocalyptic proportions, so "life on a flood plain" becomes life with impending doom. I don't buy it, but it is used as a defense for some of this movie's wacky action. It doesn't hold back.

The youth in *Hey Happy!* aren't so much suffering on this flood plain, as battling bad weather, aliens and boredom with debauchery.



Rita Mistry / THE GATEWAY

The reality of teen life will make audiences "extremely uncomfortable" in Marty Chan's new play.

Talented teens sink into the 7th Circle of hell

PLAY PREVIEW

The 7th Circle
The Arts Barns
27 July-4 August

Sarah Chan
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT STAFF

It was only a matter of time before the theatre world decided to portray the drama of student violence. *The 7th Circle*, a play inspired by Dante's inferno and the shootings in Columbine and Taber, set out to do just that. According to director and artistic producer Darryl Lindenbach, write Marty Chan's latest work is an attempt to represent "the reality of what's going on in our teens' world today."

Given the monumental task of honing the "reality" of a teenager's world, how did the cast and crew manage to handle *The 7th Circle*? As ironic as it is, the solution was to ensure that everybody realized there wasn't one. Lindenbach elaborates, "we can't pretend to understand and we have got to stop

trying to feed our teens a world that we perceive." The main goal of the production is to evoke emotions from its audience, positive or negative, "you don't get to sit back and say 'that was a nice show' you get to walk out saying 'you know what, that really pissed me off at parts, and I hated it.'"

"The trick is to take your emotions and opinions about what you saw and how you deal with them, and that presents the teens world."

Speaking of a teens world, the cast of *The 7th Circle* are critical to the show's success. Lindenbach insists that audiences "remember the show for all these kids, because this has been an experience they will never forget. They've gotten to do things they've never done before. They are from Whitehorse to Winnipeg and all put their ass on line in the audition. The kids that are here want to be here because they have had a special something, it's not all about talent. You have to want to be here, and you have to want to go for it."

The production is a banding together of teens and well-established

artists, such as ESO resident composer, Allan Gilliland, and lyricist Andy Northrup, in a radical production that goes to the limit in order to break out of the natural mold of theatre, particularly musical theatre.

Lindenbach explains, "this production doesn't take its audience for granted, as soon as you hear the word 'musical' most people think they understand what that means. Those people are going to get a big wake-up call because they're not sitting in a theatre where they merely watch, rather, they are part of the world that is *The 7th Circle* and will be made extremely uncomfortable."

The production is going to great lengths to exist as a play that is as individual as the teens attempting to establish their own personal voice. As Lindenbach points out, "there's nothing worse than a bunch of 30-40 yr old guys writing a show about teens. That's where most things like this go off the tracks, because they try to offer solutions and they try to pretend they know what it's like. The reality is harsh, the reality is hell"

Lesbian-themed film more than hot bodies

MOVIE REVIEW

Lost and Delirious
Directed by Léa Pool
Starring Piper Perabo, Jessica Peré, Mischa Barton
Starts Friday

Daniel Kaszor
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT STAFF

In some circles it has been affectionately called, "Piper Perabo's lesbian film," and in interviews, both of the lead actresses come off as ditzes. It's easy to see why I expected *Lost and Delirious* to be a traditional coming out movie starring a cast picked for their hot bodies rather than their hot talent. You know, the old, "I love you, but I'm not gay!" "Oh but I love you so much that I will get over my fear and negative feelings about homosexuality!" But this movie is not what I expected.

Lost and Delirious is the first English film by French director Léa Pool. It is the story of a girl named Mary Bradford (Mischa Barton) who is starting at a boarding school and is rooming with two seniors, Pauline (Piper Perabo, Coyote Ugly) and Victoria (Jessica Peré). Mary soon discovers that her new roommates are quite a bit more than just friends. They share an intense love that is both physical and emotional. They think forward to next year when they will both be going to McGill and they will be able to be on their own together. However, when Pauline and Victoria are caught together, Victoria has to choose between Pauline and her family.

What makes *Lost and Delirious* different from many other films about homosexuals is that both of the characters admit and accept that they are in love with one another. What separates the two characters, and gives the film con-

flict, is the way other people view the relationship. In this way it is like *Lilies* or *Better than Chocolate*, but both of those films use homosexuality as the story's lynchpin. In *Lost and Delirious* any number of things, like race or class, could have been used to block the romance of the two characters. Because of this departure, the movie becomes more accessible to a general audience, male and female, straight and gay.

Surprisingly, both Perabo and Paré give great performances. I feared that both actresses would look out of place, but the make-up and clothing department did a superb job of making them look at home with the other girls. There are a few times where it is clear that Perabo is almost 24 and the other girls are quite a bit younger, but it never sticks out like it does in Hollywood teen films like *Wild Things* or *Jawbreaker*.

The other performances in the movie also work quite well. Mischa Barton is quite believable as the narrator of the story, and Graham Greene seems comfortable in his understated role as a groundskeeper. As the film goes on, it becomes more like a Shakespearean love story than anything. The tension is whether it will be a comedy or a tragedy.

The film is not perfect, however. There are places where your suspension of disbelief is shaken. For example, who in their right mind would put a boys' boarding school within walking distance of a girl's boarding school? What kind of teacher would allow Pauline to fence without a mask? Why is it necessary to constantly pound in the imagery of the hawk and the little mouse?

With crap like *Jurassic Park 3* to contend with, despite its few flaws, *Lost and Delirious* is one of the best films I have seen this year.



File Photo

The Painting Daisies: Daisy Blue Groff, Rachelle Van Zanten, Carolyn Fortowsky, Kim Gryba

Painting Daisies: not pushing up daisies yet

GIG PREVIEW

Painting Daisies
With Erin Smith
Sidetrack Café
27 July
Etcetera

Kelly Korpesio
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT STAFF

Have you been paying attention to your Daisies lately? Well, being a bit on the lazy side, I haven't been. But I got outside for the sun and the sounds of North Country Fair and was rocked back into action. The Painting Daisies put me in dance mode with their organic sounds, that man, I was not expecting.

It was not folk tunes and soft strums that I heard from main stage, but something new. The "whimsical" songs from '95 have been replaced with something better.

These Daisies are growing

strong. And just what kind of musical fertilizer are they using. Part of the answer may lie in their original members, singer/guitarist Daisy Blue Groff and guitar player Rachelle Van Zanten, were joined by bassist newer members, Carolyn Fortowski and drummer Kym Grymba, after the recording of the Daisies' first album.

The presence of the new members is apparent in their newest material. Listen to *Fortissimo* and you'll hear raging string riffs and unexpectedly aggressive drum solos. Acclaimed for their eclectic mix of everything from bluesy sounds to electronic influences, there's also a flower-fresh attitude behind the music.

The girls don't have fluffy, powder-soft dreams when they practice, but healthy amounts of ambition. One strategy for success is organization and touring that allows them to hang onto their day jobs. Free time becomes very

scarce at this point.

Fortunately, Daisy took time out of her busy schedule, including her day job (it's painting, naturally) to talk about the band. The Daisies are rooted in strong personal relationships it seems, giving them strong roots.

Groff describes the group as "sisters, mothers, wives, friends... everything but lovers." The women act as a collective focused on success, but are also grounded in reality.

The suggestion that they're headed for sure success causes Groff to caution that just because things are looking up, "it doesn't mean we're going to make a living at music." Ah, the artists plight.

The singer does, however show signs of knowing how to get ahead in the music biz without selling out and compromising your sound. "You have to be very adaptable," she states, "We [perform] for our fans, but it comes from ourselves."

Grrl-power book misses mark

BOOK REVIEW

Cover Me
Mariko Tamaki
McGilligan Books

Erika Thorkelson
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

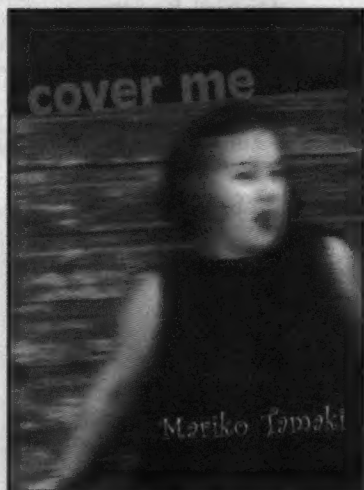
Mariko Tamaki's first work, *Cover Me*, is the latest book to jump on the Gen-X riot-grrrl bandwagon. Unfortunately, it's a few years too late.

It is the story of Traci Yamoto, an Asian Canadian girl who, after her mother's nervous breakdown, finds herself slipping into insanity. Lost and lonely, she begins to habitually cut herself to ribbons with razors until one day the blade slips and nearly kills her.

The plot becomes irretrievably vacuous when Traci takes solace in rock and roll, picks up a bisexual boyfriend, and moves to Montreal to find a new life—isn't that just like a troubled youth.

The story is a composite of every girl teen angst novel since Margaret Atwood's *Catseye*. It has all the ingredients that make novels of this genre successful—parents who don't understand, self-mutilation, hospitalisation, tattoos, and good old rock-'n'-roll—but the difference between Mariko Tamaki and Joyce Carol Oates or Susanna Keyson, is that the story she tells is so hip and simple that it feels contrived.

Where similar books, such as *Foxfire* and *Girl Interrupted*, tri-



umph as realistic confessionals (true or otherwise), *Cover Me* fails miserably with flat characters and flippant narration that, while it may be a comment on Gen-X apathy, serves only to gloss over the importance of the central conflicts. As a narrative about Canadian girlhood and the fight for free expression *Cover Me* also drowns, bogged down by disconnected anecdotes and cutesy doodles.

The whole thing reads like a Post Modern *Sweet Valley High* and for that reason would be most successful with Junior High girls who haven't discovered the heavier teen angst reading material. The problem is that kids today won't understand the mid-nineties references or the controversy over Traci's purple hair.

Luckily, the movie will make millions as a nineties period piece when they write in Angelina Jolie as the maniacally controlling, bra-less best friend. Sigh.



Rita Chiarelli
Breakfast at Midnight
Northern Blues
www.northernblues.com

Kelly Korpesio
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT STAFF

Think old, dodgy Canadian coffee shops—the kind you're randomly dropped off at on a hitchhiking trip. Here, you'll hear Chiarelli. Think melancholy: the theme of life when it comes to love and hangovers.

Chiarelli's low vocals are sometimes raspy, other times they bellow. She's sometimes blues, sometimes rock, and sometimes country. Maybe an identity crisis, or maybe just looking to tell her story? But it wasn't one I expected. An aboriginal Albertan, I thought traditional roots, like native folk songs. I was wrong.

This woman's got roots, but it's in the honest lyrics about unsurprising reality. Her classic rock sounds are the kind you encounter sharing a beer with friends at The Commercial Hotel. Canadian and close to home, honest and close to your heart, curl up with Chiarelli and close your eyes. Her lyrics wash over you with warm images like wild horses and eggs over-easy, the perfect hangover food.

CULTURA OBSCURA



The Incinolet

Dave Alexander
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Despite what the name suggests, the Incinolet is not some type of African grazing animal, but the ultimate gift for hygiene freaks.

What is more appealing to someone with a severe germ phobia than a toilet that doesn't simply dispose of faeces, but outright destroys it corn and all?

The Incinolet is "the world's only electric incinerating toilet." After doing your business in the bowl liner, the device drops it into a chamber that then cooks it into a small amount of "clean ash." A blower forces the air through a filter to an outside vent as not to fill your bathroom with the stench of fried poo. You then simply dispose of the ash and voila, you've sent that turd straight to hell.

The only drawback is it requires a fair amount of energy to run even a small crap incinerator—each cycle takes a kilowatt of energy and 1-1/2 to 1-3/4 hours, not including the extra 30-minutes to cool the machine off.

SITE UNSEEN



www.whatshouldiputonthe fence.com

Adam Rozenhart
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT STAFF

If you've ever chained your bike to a fence only to be told much later that you're not allowed to do so, you'd be pretty annoyed. When Howard De Walden Estates

Limited posted a notice saying that bicycles couldn't be chained to their fence in central London, the "Fencemaster" decided to take matters into his own hands.

Armed with the Internet and dozens of random objects, the Fencemaster has chained any and all objects except bicycles to De Walden's fence and photographed them for all to see. From fridge doors to frying pans, he's put up just about everything, much to De Walden's chagrin.

What's best about this site is that users can vote on items to be chained to the fence and the Fencemaster will do his best to see that said object earns its rightful place on his website.

If you've ever wanted to stick it to the man because he's an asshole, go see what the Fencemaster has in store for you and watch De Walden Estates writhe in abject annoyance

CLASSIFIEDS

To place a classified ad, call
Information Registries at 492-4212

Wanted

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Employment - Part Time

U of A Students' Union looking for a part-time "Access Fund Administrator" for approx. 20 hrs/week \$9.11/hr starting at the end of August. Shared position. Responsible for administration of the fund & interviewing bursary applicants. Must have effective communication, org. & time mgmt skills. Familiarity with Mac programs, particularly FileMaker Pro an asset. For a detailed job description, e-mail accessfund@mail.su.ualberta.ca Apply in writing to Box 700 Rm 2-900 SUB, U of A Campus, T6G 2J7 by 17 August. Include hours you are available to work during the day. Only shortlisted contacted.

U of A Students' Union Information Registries is looking for part-time "Information Consultants" for approx 10 hrs/week, \$6.50/hr from September

to April, with a chance of working over the summer. Responsible for helping customers at Info Booths and Main Office. For a detailed job description, e-mail registries@su.ualberta.ca or check out job posting #1316 at CaPS. Apply in writing to 030-A SUB, U of A Campus, T6G 2J7 or by fax at 492-7267 by 5:00pm, 31 July. Only shortlisted contacted.

Volunteers Wanted

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Sex Boys #7 by The Late Michael Jay Winters



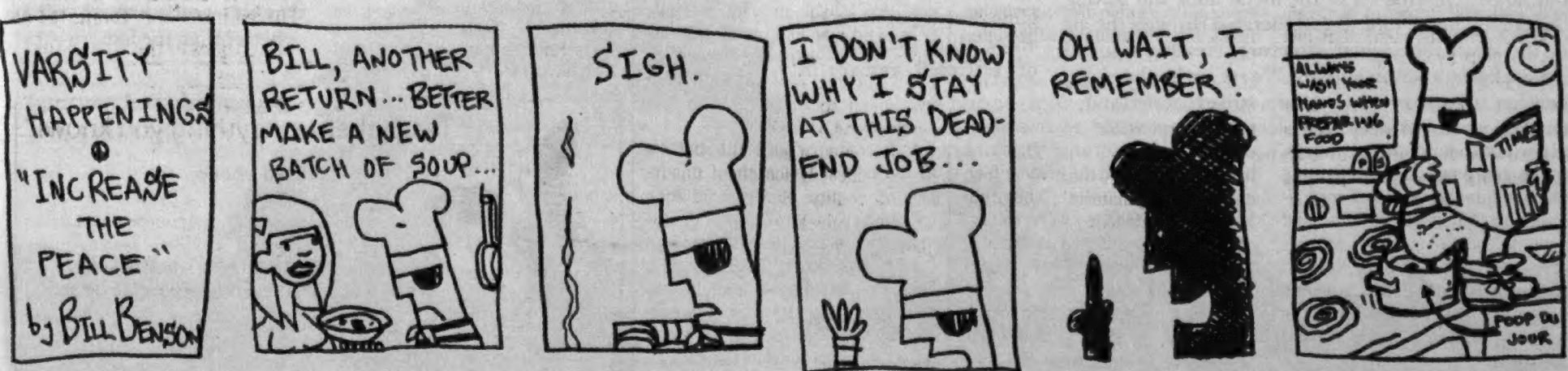
Lazer Comix 2020 by Christopher Marcel Boutet



Space Cat by Old Man Griwkowsky



Varsity Crappenings by Billford Benson



And the rains came...

So there I was, living with my fiancée's family, in a small rural village, roughly 25 kilometres south of Ouagadougou, the capital city of Burkina Faso, a small country located just north of Ghana, in the heart of West Africa. I'd lived in Burkina Faso before, but only during the dry season, a time when not even a millimetre of rain will fall for well over four months. The soil becomes parched, some of the village wells dry up, and the temperature soars, easily reaching the upper forties. The landscape becomes a yellowish shade of brown as the withered remains of millet stalks litter the fields, adding some slight texture to the overwhelmingly dusty surface. It's a long way from Canada, but I suppose that's why I love it.

We'd spent the night sleeping outside, as the warmth of the daytime sun had turned our mud-brick house into an oven. Not even those who had grown up with the 46-degree Celsius heat could stand sleeping inside the house at night. So, as we did every evening, we moved the mattress out into the yard, stringing the mosquito net up with several large sticks, some twine, and the occasional piece of rubber salvaged from the inner tube of a long discarded tire. The music from the local bar, half a kilometre away, floated in the air, crackling as the speakers took their nightly abuse. Falling asleep can be hard, especially with a sky full of stars to entice the eyes.

I awoke sometime in the morning, just as the sun was beginning to transform the night into the dark blue of dawn. A light breeze ruffled the sheets through the mosquito netting, blowing the ubiquitous grains of West-African dust into my face. The chorus of roosters had started, like the ultimate experiment in stereo, with every neighbouring chicken adding its voice. It was then that I felt the first drop.

Just a little drop, not much bigger than a grain of uncooked rice, followed several seconds later by another, then another. Being the only person outside that was awake, I assumed my role as precipitation sentinel, calling out, "La pluie commence! La pluie commence!"

As those around me began opening their eyes, the rustling of leaves, growing louder and louder, could be heard in the distance, along with the sound of pebbles striking and tumbling down sheet metal roofing. Now, everyone heard the obvious signs and scrambled to their feet, removing all of their sheets, personal belongings, and anything that wasn't firmly planted, from the ground. Running as fast as we could, arms full of items that hadn't been put away the night before, we raced into the house, hoping that we'd make it before the winds hit. The welded metal door was quickly closed and bolted firmly in place while we all sat, catching our breath in the glow of the kerosene lamp.

And then it hit. A swirling mass of dust, rocks and poorly-rooted plant life was pounding into our house, clinking off of the metal door and pelting our dented metal roof. It reverberated through the air of the small rectangular structure, creating a sound almost louder than an aircraft. We sat, on hard wooden benches and patio-type furniture, still exhausted and wishing we could sleep. But sleep was impossible due to the deafening noise above our heads. And then came the rain.

First, drop by drop, then cup by cup, then bucket by bucket. We looked out the metal-slated windows, watching the water as it cascaded down, soaking everything, from trees to donkeys, with a force and intensity that I had never witnessed before. I watched as the rain ate away at our mud-brick house. The roof, full of holes, began to leak. Water was streaming down the inside walls, dripping on our heads and soaking any books that had not been carefully stowed in plastic sacks. We ran about, putting buckets, pans, cups, and mugs anywhere where we spotted a puddle, hoping to contain the water, as futile an effort as we knew it was.

The rain was relentless, leaving us wet, without sleep, and grumpy. It poured for at least half an hour, when finally, almost as suddenly as it had started, the rain stopped. The sunrise had turned the dark blues to grey and the calm, fresh, humid breeze blew through our house as we opened the windows, mopped the floors, and cleaned up the yard, filled with debris the wind had blown in.

When I stepped back out, I marvelled at the giant mud puddle that surrounded our house. Our yard had become an island, with the dirt road out front having channeling a small river fed by the flooded fields from kilometres around us. The neighbours started to gather to watch the water as it flowed around the trees, gurgling over exposed roots and washing the ground of scattered garbage.

Their expression wasn't that of shock, but rather of relief, a confirmation that this year, the rains had come.

The slightly shaken chickens emerged from their coups, the pigs started wallowing in the plentiful puddles, and the people began replanting their fields. Much of their newly-seeded crop had fallen victim to nature's over-enthusiasm, but nobody complained.



The rain is a gift,

they told me—a necessity and a blessing, even if it can cause hardship. And while the children played games in the streams and ponds, laughing as their friends fell into the mud, their parents also smiled, hoping that this year's harvest will be better than the last.

words and pictures
by Iain Ilich

